

Countering Violent Extremism – November 2022

This summary is prepared for the 2022 three-month trial of the Forward Project of the Social Change Lab - Susilo Wibisono & Winnifred R. Louis – details of the methodology and all summaries available here: <http://www.socialchangelab.net/forward.html> and via subscription/email at <https://socialchangelab.substack.com/>. Feedback welcome, to w.louis@psy.uq.edu.au .

Please cite as: Allen, M., Wibisono, S., & Louis, W.R. (2023). *Countering Violent Extremism– November 2022*. A publication of the Social Change Lab FORWARD project. Published online 17 February 2023. Available at <http://www.socialchangelab.net/forward.html>.

Month/Year	November 2022
Key term	“countering violent extremism” and countering violent extremism
Database	Google Scholar
Link to database	https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17p2fFHcyHQ0-hhlzNb2ZV-nzAUPxBPYs1fXsVC1_IRY/edit?usp=sharing

Overview

Overall, there were 19 documents resulting from the search using “countering violent extremism” in November 2022 on Google Scholar. We considered that 13 papers are relevant with the understanding of countering violent extremism, with six partially relevant (e.g., an article that is not directly focused on violent extremism, but broader right-wing groups). The results consist of 13 journal articles, two research reports, three conference proceedings, and one book chapter.

Approaches and disciplines

All journal articles and research reports were empirical, where eight of them were qualitative studies (three interview studies, one systematic review, and four socio-politics analyses), one of them quantitative study, and some case studies. The data published in the journal articles, research reports, and conference proceedings were collected from multiple countries and continents. Four studies analysed the data collected from Europe, one study from Africa, one study from Southeast Asia, and one study represents a ‘global’ study, where the data were collected from multiple countries in multiple continents. Studies on countering violent extremism in this month examined contexts such as Pakistan, Ireland, Kenya, USA (two studies), Spain, Afghanistan, Canada, Russia (two studies), Korea, and the Chad Basin Region. The publications from this month represent multiple disciplines that include political science, criminology, and sociology.

Findings and themes

There are at least three main themes associated with “countering violent extremism”, according to the literature published on Google Scholars in November 2022: women, young people, and religion. The impact of extremism on women was addressed by multiple scholars. For example, Ozcan (2022) proposed that “radicalization and violent extremism primarily hit against women’s rights” (p. 168). Sonrexa et al. (2022) also identified that young women who move from rural to urban areas for work or education are targeted by extremist networks, taking advantage of any feelings of isolation or loneliness. This psychological situation is a point of concern that may influence women’s decision to join extremist groups, although some other factors such as traditional gender norms and patriarchal norms are also critical points for understanding violent extremism and the involvement of women in it, Sonrexa and colleagues argue. Women contributing to extremist groups or families may lack autonomy over their decision-making (Cook, 2022). From this perspective, more freedom and better education may be of assistance to help women resisting extremist ideologies and groups (Ibrahim & Wario, 2022). Education plays an integral role in countering violent extremism and prevailing against violent religious trends (Malik & Begum, 2022). Since vulnerable groups in particular societies such as women and youth are popular targets for recruitment and mobilisation by violent and extremist groups, preventative attempts to provide educational pathways for them are important as a source of resilience against violent extremism (Ibrahim & Wario, 2022; Malik & Begum, 2022; Skare, 2022; Sonrexa, 2022).

A prevention concept proposed by Malik and Begum (2022) called “counter-hegemony” is an educational process that teaches individuals to accept the plurality of perspectives reflected by fellow humans with an open heart and mind. However, another study emphasized that re-education interventions, while necessary, may not be enough to prevent youths’ radicalisation (Membrives & Alonso, 2022). Advertising a program as related to preventing violent extremism overtly may cause some distrust in young people, as they are more prone to radicalisation (Skare, 2022). While young people may be more prone to radicalisation due to being targets of recruiters, this may also make them one of the most strategic sources of resilience against terrorism (Ibrahim & Wario, 2022).

Another theme of the research is that fight against violent extremism requires constant vigilance (Wojnicz, 2022). Right-wing extremism within the military is a reoccurring issue (Van Dongen et al., 2022; Malik & Begum, 2022), and religious causes can become pathways towards adopting militant causes (Malik & Begum, 2022). While a lot of countries

may face the issue of extremism in the military, with the US and Germany most affected, this does not mean they all face it in the same way (Van Dongen et al., 2022). Studies of individual risk factors have found that if someone has a background in the military with right-wing leanings, it does not make them more dangerous (Van Dongen et al., 2022). Extremist propaganda is more likely to spread in places such as prisons, or on the internet (Wojnicz, 2022). Because of this, government actions towards preventing and combating radicalisation is centred around these places, which requires constant work and cooperation between many parties (Wojnicz, 2022). Countering violent extremism assists in combatting and preventing terrorism and extremist narratives, as well as providing rehabilitation and aftercare interventions for former terrorists (Bhatti & Shah, 2022).

Selected References – Countering Violent Extremism – November 2022

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